AN ACCOUNT OF Mr. Firmin's RELIGION; AND OF The Present State OF THE UNITARIAN CONTROVERSY.

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AN ACCOUNT OF Mr. Firmin's RELIGION.

MR. *Firmin* was remarkable, above almoſt any private Man of this Nation and Age, for his care and agency on behalf of the Poor; and his zeal and activity for his way (or Sect) of Religion. I ſhall ſay nothing of the former; we have an account of his diligence, and methods for the Poor, from ſome friends of his, that knew him longer, and with the neareſt intimacy. But concerning his Religion, I may claim to know as much of it, as any other. It was the ſame in general with that of all Proteſtants, that is,

the H. Bible; and the Apoſtles Creed, as the abridgment of the Chriſtian Faith contain'd in that Book. But as for the Explication of Articles controverted, it was that which he and his party call *Unitarian*; but others *Socinian*. Mr. *Firmin*, and the Engliſh *Unitarians*, never were entirely in the ſentiments of *F. Socinus*; *they embraced the opinions of Mr.* J. Bidle.

Mr. *Bidle* differ'd from *Socinus*, and the foreign *Unitarians*, as in ſome other points, ſo in that, he believed the H. Spirit is, tho' not *God*, yet a *Perſon* in the vulgar ſenſe of that word.

Mr. *Firmin* was a very diſcerning but not a learned Man.[1] Some others of his party have all the qualities, for which the foreign *Socinians* have been ſo much eſteemed; that is to ſay, beſides an acuteneſs and dexterity of Thought, they are excellently Learned, eſpecially in the ſacred Criticiſm. But that which, in my opinion, moſt commends him and them, is the freedom and ſincerity, which they have all along practiſed, in judging of the *controverted Articles* of Religion. They followed indeed, at firſt, Mr. *Bidle* (as he eſpouſed the Tenets of *Socinus*) but ſo, that as ſoon as there appeared better light,

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(to uſe a Scripture Phraſe) *they rejoyced in it.*

From the time that *F. Socinus*, and his Doctrines, began to be taken notice of; the Churches, of all denominations, were perſuaded, the difference between *Socinianiſm*, and the doctrin of the *Catholic Church*, was Real, Great, and even Unreconcilable. Many learned Men have thought, ſome ſuch degree of accord between the Church, and other Diſſenters, might be deviſed, that they might bear with one another, and hold occaſional Communion: But *Socinianiſm* was ſuppoſed to be a departure from the Churches Doctrin, ſo *far*, and in ſo *many* points, that no Coalition, in Communion, much leſs in Doctrine, might ever be hoped. And of this mind were the Engliſh *Socinians*, as well as the Foreign; and both of them no leſs earneſtly than the Church. But, as I ſaid, the Engliſh *Unitarians* (or *Socinians)* being Men of ingenuous and free Minds and Principles; and therefore always ready to entertain farther light: after 8 or 9 years late conteſt, in print, with the principal Divines of this Nation, they have been ſo dextrous and happy, that, inſtead of farther embroiling the points in queſtion, which is the uſual effect of the

Paper-war, they ſeem to have accommodated whatſoever differences depending between the Church and them.

A greater Service, or any equal to it, was perhaps never done, to the Catholic Church. For as on the one ſide the *Socinians* being ſo much the leſſer Party, ſtood expoſed to all the pœnal Laws in any Nation, that had ever been enacted againſt any ſort of Heretics: So the Church was more dangerouſly threatned, by this *Cloud, of the bigneſs of a man's hand*, than by all other Diſſenters, or Oppoſers whatſoever. The opinions of the *Socinians*, had that appearance of *Reaſon*; ſuch an agreement with all the yielded Principles of *Philoſophy*, whether Natural or Metaphyſical: that if they had been foſtered by the helps, under the cover and ſhelter of which, other denominations of Religion have made ſhift to ſubſiſt; *Socinianiſm* would have flouriſht and ſpread like that Tree in the Prophet *Daniel*; *the hight whereof reached to Heaven, and the ſight thereof to the ends of all the Earth.* Other Sects, by the favour of Princes, or the quality of the times, have obtained an exemption, from Mulcts, and Penalties of the Laws: and thus, their courſe not being impeded by any dams or banks; they have

have over-ſpread ſometimes conſiderable parts of particular Countries. If *Socinianiſm* had any where enjoyed thoſe *Halcyon-days*, its ſudden, irreſiſtible Progreſs would have been (that I may again borrow one of the ſacred Compariſons) as *Lightning, that ruſheth out of the Eaſt, and ſhineth even to the Weſt.* Alas, on equal Ground, and with equal Circumſtances, the combat between (unintelligible) *Miſtery*, and (clear) *Reaſon*; between (ſeeming) Contradictions, Abſurdities and *Impoſſibilities*, and (a rational, obvious, accountable) *Faith*, would ſoon have been ended.

But 'tis better ended: The Divine Providence and Goodneſs, in mercy to both Parties, has granted a Peace, inſtead of a Victory. It has pleaſed God to favor the ſuffering ſide with an unexpected Light; he has ſhown 'em what may ſeem incredible, that their Oppoſers *think*, as they (the *Unitarians*) *ſpeak*; that their difference is not in the ideas or notions, but only in the terms or words. To manifeſt this, Mr. *Firmin* cauſed the following *Scheme of Agreement*, offer'd to him by a Perſon long converſant in theſe queſtions, to be conſidered by ſome of the principal *Unitarians* in *England*: And being ap-

proved by him and them, it was publiſhed about a year ſince.

The Scheme of Agreement.

Mr. *Edwards*, after having publiſhed divers good Books, and one that may deſerve the epithet of Excellent, *his Demonſtration of the Exiſtence and Providence of God*, found an inclination in himſelf, that he could not (it ſhould ſeem) reſiſt of contriving a New Religion, or rather Impiety; and of imputing it *to the Socinians*. By whom he means (it appears) the *Unitarians*.

Thoſe in *England*, who call themſelves *Unitarians*, never were entirely in the ſentiments of *Socinus*, or the *Socinians*. Notwithſtanding, as our Oppoſers have pleas'd themſelves in calling us *Socinians*, we have not always declined the name; becauſe in interpreting many texts of Scripture, we cannot but approve and follow the judgment of thoſe Writers; who are confeſſed by all to be excellent Critics, and very Judicious. As particularly, and chiefly, *H. Grotius*, who, it muſt be granted, was *Socinian* all over: And *D. Eraſmus*, who, tho' he lived conſiderably before *Socinus*, com-

commonly interprets that way; and therfore is charged, by Card. *Bellarmine*, as a downright *Arian*. *Non poterat*, ſays the Cardinal, *Arianam cauſam manifeſtiùs propugnare.* " *Eraſmus* could not more openly eſpouſe the *Arian* Cauſe, than he has done; in his Notes on the Fathers, and on the principal Texts of H. Scripture. *Præf. ad libros* 5. *de Chriſto.* But tho, as I ſaid, we are not *Socinians*, nor yet *Arians*; ſeeing Mr. *Edwards* has contrived a Creed for us, under the name of *Socinians*, I will anſwer both directly and ſincerely concerning the ſeveral Articles of the Creed, which he ſaith is ours.

As to the References unto places in particular Authors, where Mr. *Edwards* would have it thought, the Articles of that Creed are affirmed: I have examined ſome of his principal References, and can ſay of 'em, they are either Perverſions, or downright Falſifications, of what the Authors referred to did intend. Dr. *Wallis*, whoſe diſhoneſt Quotations out of the *Socinians*, have been deteſted by every body, is hardly more blamable in that kind than Mr. *Edwards*; ſaving that the Doctor being, as one rightly tells him, ſomewhat *more* than a *Socinian*, did but foul his own Neſt by his Forgeries: but we cannot certainly

tainly ſay what is the opinion of Mr. *Edwards* in the great Article, in queſtion among us.

But come we to the Creed, which he ſays is ours: as I promis'd, I will anſwer to every Article of it, ſincerely and directly.

I. *I believe, concerning the Scriptures, that there are Errors, Miſtakes, and Contradictions in ſome places of it: That the Authority of ſome whole books of it is queſtionable; yea, that the whole Bible has been tamper'd with, and may be ſuſpected to be corrupted.*

That *there are Errors, Miſtakes, and Contradictions in the H. Bible*, was never ſaid by any perſon, pretending to be a Chriſtian: if by the Bible, you mean *the Bible, as it came out of the hands of the inſpired Authors of it.* As on the other ſide, that there are Errors, Miſtakes, or Contradictions in the vulgar Copies of the Bible, uſed by the Church of *Rome* (for inſtance) or the *Engliſh* Church, was never queſtioned by any learned Man, of whatſoever Sect or way: and leaſt of all can Mr. *Edwards* queſtion it. He has publiſhed a book concerning *the Excellence and Perfection of* H. Scripture;

ture; in which book, he finds great fault with our Engliſh Bible. He ſaith, in the Title of his 13*th* chapter; "It is *faulty*, "and *defective*, in many places of the Old "and New Teſtaments; and I offer all "along in this chapter particular *Emen-* "*dations*, in order to render it more ex- "act and compleat.

As to the *Hebrew* and *Greek* copies of the Bible; 'tis well known, ſome are more perfect, and ſome leſs: They differ very much; for in the Old Teſtament, the *Hebrew* Critics have noted 800 various readings; in the New there are many more. Mr. *Gregory* of *Oxford*, ſo much eſteemed, and even venerated, for his admirable Learning, ſays hereupon; and ſays it, *cum Licentiâ Superiorum*: "There is no "book in the World, that has ſuffer'd ſo "much, by the hand of Time, as the Bi- "ble. *Pref.* p. 4. He judged, and judged truly, that tho' the firſt Authors of the Bible were *Divinely Inſtructed Men*; yet the Copiers, Printers, and Publiſhers, in following Ages, were all of them *Fallible* Men, and ſome of them ill-deſigning Men. He knew that all the Church Hiſtorians, and Critics, have confeſſed, or rather have *warned* us, that ſome copies of the Bible, have been very much vitiated by the hands

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as well of the Orthodox, as of Heretics: and that 'tis matter of great difficulty, at this diſtance of time from the Apoſtolic Age, to aſſertain the true reading of H. Scripture, in *all* places of it.

Yet we do not ſay hereupon, as Mr. *Edwards* charges us, that the Bible, much leſs the *whole* Bible, is corrupted. For as to the faulty readings in the common Bibles of ſome Churches, and in ſome Manuſcript Copies; the Providence of God has ſo watched over this ſacred Book, that we know (what by information of the antient *Church-Hiſtorians*, and the writings of the *Fathers*, what by the *early Tranſlations* of the Bible into *Greek*, *Latin*, and *Syriac*, and the *concurrent* Teſtimony of the more *antient Manuſcript copies*) both who they were that introduced the *corrupt* readings, and what is the *true* Reading in all *Texts of weight and conſequence*. In ſhort, as to this matter, we agree with the Critics of other Sects and Denominations; that tho' ill Men have often attempted, they could never effect the corruption of H. Scripture: the antient *Manuſcripts*, the firſt *Tranſlations*, the *Fathers*, and *Hiſtorians* of the Church, are ſufficient directors, concerning the authentic and genuine Reading of doubtful places of H. Scripture.

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Farther, whereas Mr. *Edwards* would intimate, that we reject divers Books of H. Scripture: On the contrary we receive into our Canon all thoſe Books of Scripture that are received or owned by the Church of *England*; and we reject the Books rejected by the Church of *England.* We know well that ſome Books and parts of Books, reckoned to be wrote by the Apoſtles or Apoſtolical Men, were queſtioned, nay were refuſed by ſome of the Antients; but we concur with the opinion of the *preſent* Catholic Church concerning them, for the reaſons given by the Catholic Church, and which I mention in the Reply to my Lord the Bp. of *Chicheſter.*

If Mr. *Edwards* would have truly repreſented the opinion of the *Socinians* concerning the Scriptures, he knew where to find it, and ſo expreſſed as would have ſatisfied every body. He knows that in the *Brief Notes on the Creed of* Athanaſius, they have declared what is their ſenſe in very unexceptionable words: "*The Holy Scrip-*" *tures*, ſay they, *are a* divine, *an* infalli-" ble, *and* compleat *Rule*, *both of Faith* " *and Manners.* Br. Notes, *p.* 1. The Church neither requires nor deſires that they ſhould ſay more.

II. *I believe concerning God, That he is not a Spirit, properly ſpeaking; but a ſort of* Body, *ſuch as Air or* Æther *is. That he is not immenſe, infinite, or every where preſent, but confined to certain places. That he hath no knowledg of ſuch future Events, as depend on the* Free Will *of Man: and That it is impoſſible ſuch things ſhould be foreſeen by him. That there is* a Succeſſion *in God's eternal duration, as well as in time, which is the meaſure of the duration that belong* to finite Beings.

That Almighty God is *Incorporeal, Omnipreſent* and *Omniſcient*, has not only been confeſſed, but proved by the Unitarians of this Nation in divers of their late Prints. As to the other, that all Duration, that of God as well as of Creatures, conſiſts *in a Succeſſion*, is affirmed by ſome Learned Men of all Perſwaſions and Ways, as well as by the Unitarians. It ſhould ſeem Mr. *Edwards* holds, that God poſſeſſes eternal Life *all at once*: that to God, Eternity is one ſtanding *permanent Moment*. St. *John* is of another mind, for he deſcribes the duration of God by *a Succeſſion*; by *was*, *is*, and *is to come*. "Grace be to you, and Peace, "*ſays he*, from him which *is*, *was*, and

"*is*

" *is to come*, Rev. 1. 4. 'Tis undeniable by any, but affected Wranglers, that here the duration of God, his continuance in being, is diſtinguiſhed by *the threefold Succeſſion (was, is,* and *ſhall be)* which is common to all Beings. Eternal life poſſeſſed *all at once*, is one of the monſtrous Paradoxes which our Oppoſers maintain; for all that I can ſee, meerly from a ſpirit of contradiction; for it has no manner of ground, either in Reaſon or Holy Scripture. I deſire to know of 'em how the duration of God, is the leſs perfect; becauſe 'tis ſaid to conſiſt in *a Succeſſion*, or what is the ſame, to be diſtinguiſhed by *was, is,* and *ſhall be*: ſeeing 'tis confeſſed on all hands, that he carrieth all Perfections into every Succeſſion of his Duration.

But is it not a Scandal that ſome Unitarians of foreign Parts, have denied the Spirituality or Incorporeity of God; his Omnipreſence and Omniſcience: ſaying and contending for it, that he is *a Body*, with ſuch Configuration of Parts, as *Men* have; conſequently that he is in Heaven, inſpecting indeed and governing all things, but by the miniſtry of the ſeveral Orders of Angels; and that he doth not foreſee contingent Events, but only ſuch Events as are *neceſſarily* (not arbitrarily) produced by their

their Cauſes? Doubtleſs; but no more a ſcandal to the Unitarians, than to their Oppoſers: for they are *Errors* which ſome of the *Fathers* (even the moſt antient, learned and pious of 'em) have defended as Truths. Nay it ſhould ſeem, they were ſome time the prevaling Opinions in ſome places: namely, when the Anthropomorphite Doctrine was ſo zealouſly eſpouſed; that the *Hermits* and *Cenobites* would not indure their Biſhops, if they but ſuſpected 'em of *Origen*'s Doctrine, that God is *a Spirit, without Parts or Paſſions.* And in denying the Spirituality and Omnipreſence of God, they muſt needs be underſtood not to believe his (certain and abſolute) Preſcience of *contingent Events.* About the year 400, when almoſt every body concerned themſelves in condemning, and departing (as far as poſſible) from the opinions of *Origen*; the Anthropomorphite Doctrine, and its conſequences, were the *Standard-Orthodoxy* of many places, and were *Hereſy* no where. Even St. *John Chryſoſtom* at *Conſtantinople* hardly defended the *Fratres Longi* from the Proſecutions of *Theophilus*, Archbiſhop and Patriarch of *Alexandria*; who was a profeſt Anthropomorphite, and had expelled the *Fratres Longi*, for adhering to *Origen*'s

Origen's Doctrine of the Spirituality and Omnipreſence of God.

But as I ſaid, we not only diſlike, but utterly reject the dangerous Doctrine, That God hath a Body, is like to Man; togewith its conſequences, That he is neither Omnipreſent, nor Omniſcient. It may as well be ſaid, he is not at all; nay this latter, tho the Anthropomorphites ſee it not, ſeems to be implied and included in the former. But we condemn not the *Schechina* or glorious Appearance of God in Heaven, which many Learned Men hold; nor the ſpiritual Body of Chriſt.

III. *I believe farther concerning God, That there is no diſtinction of* Perſons *or* Subſiſtences *in God: And that the Son and Holy Ghoſt are not God: The former of them being only a* Man; *the latter no other than the* Power *or Operation of God. That there was nothing of* Merit *in what Chriſt did or ſuffered; and that therefore he could not make* ſatisfaction *for the Sins of the World.*

But Mr. *Edwards* too much miſtakes. The queſtion is not at all concerning three *Perſons*, or three *Subſiſtences* in God: but whether there are three infinite *Subſiſtences*; three eternal *Minds* and *Spirits*? We deny the latter with the whole Catho-

lick Church, againſt the Tritheiſts: We never queſtioned the former, *Perſons* or *Subſiſtences*; but only *as Perſons are uſed or taken for Spirits, Minds and Beings.* I ſhall explain this matter however more fully, in my Anſwer to the Biſhops of *Worceſter, Sarum* and *Chicheſter*, annexed to this *Agreement*; or any one may ſee what is our ſenſe, *in the Judgment of a diſintereſted Perſon, concerning the Controverſy between Dr.* S——th, *and Dr.* Sherlock: *By a Divine of the Church of* England. What that Author makes to be the Doctrine of *the Nominals*, and of *the Church*, concerning the Bleſſed Trinity, the Divinity of our Saviour, and the Satisfaction, is and ever was the belief of the Unitarians, as well as of the Catholick Church.

But we ſay, the Lord Chriſt is only *a Man*, and the Holy Spirit only *the Power* of God. No, we ſay, our Lord Chriſt is *God* and *Man*. He is *Man*, in reſpect of his reaſonable Soul, and human Body; *God*, in reſpect of *God in him*. Or more ſcholaſtically, in reſpect of the Hypoſtatical (or Perſonal) Union, of the Humanity of Chriſt with the Divinity. By which the Catholick Church means, and we mean, *the Divinity was not only occaſionally aſſiſting to, but was* (and *is always*) *in Chriſt, illumi-*

illuminating, conducting and actuating him. More than this, is the Hereſy of *Eutyches*, and leſs we never held: tho we confeſs that careleſs and leſs accurate Expreſſions, may have been uſed by both Parties; of which neither ought to take advantage againſt the other, when it appears there is no heterodox Intention.

That by *the Spirit* of God is ſometimes meant (in Holy Scripture) *the Power* of God, cannot be denied: but concerning the Three Divine *Perſons*, we believe as the Catholick Church believes, That they are *relative Subſiſtences*, internal *Relations* of the Deity to it ſelf. Or as the Schools, after St. *Auſtin*, explain this; Original *unbegotten* Wiſdom or Mind, reflex or *begotten* Wiſdom, called in Holy Scripture the *Logos*, and the eternal *ſpiration* of Divine Love.

But do you not ſay, "There was *no* "*Merit* in what Chriſt did or ſuffered: "and that he could not make *ſatisfacti-* "*on* for our Sins? He may for our parts be *Anathema*, that teaches or believes that Doctrine. *We* believe that the Lord Chriſt by what he did and what he ſuffered, was by the gracious acceptance of God, a true and *perfect Propitiation* for Sinners that repent, and turn to the good ways.

IV. In the next Article he makes us to believe a great many things; as *that*, "The first Man was not created in *a* "*state of Uprightness*. As if it were possible that men in their right senses should think the first Man was created *a Sinner*.

That "By his *Fall Adam* did not lose "*Righteousness* and Holiness, which are "part of *the Image* of God. As who should say, that by being a Sinner, he did *not sin*, or become *unlike* to God.

That "*Adam*'s Posterity have received "*no hurt* nor *stain* by his Apostacy. As if you should say, that neither his *bad Example*, nor *the Curse* that made the Earth so much less fruitful, was any *hurt*; and that the Rebellion of an Ancestor, no not against God, is not *any blot* in his Family. I shall grow quite out of conceit with these Unitarians, if they say many more such weak things. But in very deed I imagine Mr. *Edwards* had a mind to have charged 'em more home; when he does, we shall consider what to answer. I am of opinion that in this part of the Article he was somewhat ashamed of his own Doctrine; and that he feared to make himself and Party ridiculous, by a clear and distinct Representation of their opinion.

That

That " Mankind, notwithſtanding *A-*
" *dam's fall*, have by nature an ability to
" deſire and embrace all *ſpiritual Good*;
" and to avoid all that is ſinful or vitious.
They are *bold Britains*. What, embrace all the Goſpel-precepts by mere nature, when 'tis not poſſible ſo much as to know divers of them, but by *Revelation Divine*. And can they avoid too all that is vitious at all times, only by nature? In good truth, they are better and ſtronger by nature, than I ever hope to be in this Life, by the (ſuperadded) Grace of God. But here again he did not ſtrike home; he intended more than he durſt ſay: and he durſt not ſay it, leſt we ſhould ask him, whether he believes the juſt contrary?

That, " There is no need of the Spirit
" to repent, to believe, or to obey the
" Goſpel, and perform religious Acts.
'Tis a ſerious point. We anſwer, with St. *Paul, the Spirit HELPETH our Infirmities*, Rom. 8. 26. But we judg for all that, the Holy Scripture gives no occaſion to any to turn Enthuſiaſts; and to reſolve the whole duty we owe and muſt perform to God and to our Neighbor, into preternatural Impulſes, as if we were Machines and not men; or Puppets, moved by inviſible Wires, not Men that

act by their own *Reaſon* and *Choice.*

That " Men are righteous before God, " not by the merit of Chriſt, but by their " own good works. We anſwer, with all but Antinomians, and the more rigid Calviniſts: *the Merit of Chriſt is not reckoned to us, without Faith, and good Works of our own.* But I am not certain, that the Calviniſts, or the Antinomiſts, would not aſſent to that Propoſition, or not allow it to be orthodox: I incline to think thoſe People have no real difference with the Church, nor the Church with them; but that they miſtake one anothers meaning.

V. Another branch of our Creed, according to Mr. *Edwards*, runs thus: *I believe concerning a future State*, That *the Souls of the Deceaſed have no knowledg or perception of any thing, they are not ſenſible of any Rewards or Pains: and that* their very Nature is abſorpt.

That at death, the Soul, as well as Body ſleeps, was *an error* of ſome of the moſt antient *Fathers*, as well as of *ſome* Unitarians. But neither of 'em ſaid, as Mr. *Edwards* pretends, that in death the very Nature of the Soul is abſorpt, *which is to ſay extinct:* they both of them held, that there is a Reſurrection of the Soul,

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as well as Body. But why dos Mr. *Edwards* impute that opinion to us, when he has read, for he quotes the book, in the *first Part* of the *Considerations on the Explications of the Trinity*, what is our sense of that matter? The words at *p.* 33. are these. " This *Error* was common " to *Socinus*, and some of the Fathers. " The Learned Mr. *Du Pinn*, in his A- " bridgment of the Fathers, has noted; " that *Justin Martyr*, *Irenæus*, *Minutius* " *Felix*, and *Arnobius*, were in this Sen- " timent. There was no reason to object " this to *Socinus*; as if it were a peculiar " opinion of his: much less to the Eng- " lish Unitarians, who never defended it, " nor (that I know of) do any of 'em " hold it.

VI. He says next; *I believe we shall not rise with the same Bodies, but that another* Matter *or* Substance *shall be substituted in their place.* I see most of our Opposers have affected to mistake our meaning concerning the resurrection of the Body: We hold nothing that is singular in the case; we differ not from the Catholick Church about it. We say with St. *Paul*, 1 Cor. 15. 35. *How are the dead raised, and with what Bodies do they come?*

—*Thou ſoweſt not the body that ſhall be.* The Body that is raiſed, is not in *all* reſpects the *ſame* that was committed to the earth: in divers, perhaps in *the moſt*, it is. We riſe not *Infants*, or decrepit *old Men*, or *lame*, or *deaf*, or any way *diſtorted*; tho' many ſo lived, and ſo died. Nay, as to *the Paſſions* reſulting from the *preſent* complexion of the body, and therefore to be reckon'd the Modifications (and as it were parts) of the body; we riſe not with them; it is not the *ſame* Body, in reſpect of thoſe Paſſions that it here lived. For inſtance, ſome are (by complexion) very cowardly, or penſive, or choleric, or jealous; *the Body that ſhall be* will not be ſuch: It will be conformed to the likeneſs of the glorious Body of our Lord Chriſt; that is, be freed from all (both external and internal) Imperfections. Farthermore, our preſent body (Phyſicians and Philoſophers ſay) is in a continual Flux; all the parts of it, internal as well as external, continually decay, and are continually alſo renewed. They decay by the Perſpiration, that is continually cauſed by the internal heat; and are continually renewed by the Nouriſhment taken in, and converted into Blood, Spirits, Fleſh, and Bones. 'Tis ſaid, by the Learned in theſe matters, that no man's body

body is the very ſame, as to the matter and ſubſtance of it, this preſent year, that it was the laſt year, and will be the next year: 'Tis wholly new by the nouriſhment of the preſent year. We ſay therefore, there ſhall be a Reſurrection of the Body; and, as ſome of the Antient Creeds ſpoke, of the *ſame* Body; as truly and as properly as *N. N.* is the *ſame Man* this year that he was one, or ſeven, or twenty years ago. If Mr. *Edwards* requires us to ſay more, he exacts more than the Church believes: For by the Reſurrection of the *ſame Body*, the Church intends only, that 'tis as *truly the ſame*, as a Man (notwithſtanding the Flux of his parts) is now the ſame *N. N.* or *J. B.* that he was ſeven or ten years paſt. Yet not *altogether the ſame*; becauſe inconceivably better: That is, without any external or internal Deformities or Weakneſſes.

VII. *I believe that at the Day of Judgment, Men ſhall not be required to give an account of their Actions; the moſt flagitious Sinners ſhall not* be examined *concerning any thing of their paſt Life: Only they ſhall be puniſhed; and their Puniſhment is this, to* utterly *ceaſe or periſh for ever. The unquenchable* Fire *is nothing but* Annihilation.

I do not know that the Scriptures or the Catholic Church, do require any to believe, that Sinners ſhall *be examined* concerning their paſt Life, at the day of the general Judgment. To what purpoſe, I pray, doth the All-knowing Judg need to be informed concerning the particulars of their Guilt? If every perſon is to be ſeverally *examined*, concerning the particulars of his tranſacted Life; the Day of Judgment will extend it ſelf to many Millions of Ages more, and farther than the whole duration of the World, from its beginning to its conſummation. It ſhould ſeem Mr. *Edwards* thinks, that becauſe the Scriptures ſpeak of the great Judgment by God, in the language of Men, and of Human Judicatures, ſuch as Trumpets, the Throne of the Judg, a formal Sentence, the Pleadings of the Guilty, the Anſwers of the Judg; that therefore in very deed, we are to expect ſuch a Scene at the Judgment by God, as at a common Aſſize. I conceive, on the contrary, that all ſuch expreſſions and words, wherever they are found in Scripture, are not intended as real Deſcriptions; but as Compariſons, or Reſemblances, by which the capacities of the Vulgar may be aſſiſted, and their affections wrought upon. All that is intended by

ſuch

ſuch expreſſions, is only this; that every one ſhall be ſo recompenſed at the Reſurrection, as is worthy of the holy Judg and compaſſionate Father of the World.

But we hold, he ſaith, that the Puniſhment of the Wicked is only *Extinction*: Their life ſhall be deſtroyed for ever by the unquenchable Fire, into which they are caſt. Which opinion, that it may look ridiculous, he words for us thus; *the unquenchable* Fire *is nothing but* Annihilation. What the Scriptures have ſaid concerning the Puniſhment of the Wicked, after the Reſurrection, is not ſo clear, but that the opinions of Learned Men, *Fathers* and *Moderns*, have been very different about it. Some (of which number is *Origen*, the moſt conſiderable of the *Ante-nicens*) held, that not only wicked Men, but the very Devils, will repent, and reform under the Puniſhments they endure: that therefore, they will be pardoned, be admitted to a new trial of their Behaviour, and may attain to Bleſſedneſs. Theſe ſay, that *Man* being a reaſonable, is therefore a docile or teachable Creature: and it not looking probable, that the Wiſdom of God will loſe any part of his Creation, but will bring it to *the Perfection*, and upon that to *the Bleſſedneſs*, of which 'tis capable; there-

therefore, what by Inſtructions, what by Puniſhments, and Encouragements, God will reclame the Bad, will perfect and confirm the Good; and ſo in the long-run of things, be acclamed *the Saviour of all.*

Others, among whom have been *ſome* (it may be *the moſt*) of the Forein *Unitarians*, have thought, that the Righteous are rewarded with an everlaſting Life of Bleſſedneſs; and the *impenitent Wicked* puniſht by that unquenchable Fire, that will wholly deſtroy their being. They believe this is the reaſon, why the Puniſhment by Hell-Fire is called Eternal *Death* in Holy Scripture. But the more current opinion among all denominations of Chriſtians is, that the Puniſhment of the Impenitent in Hell-fire, is called Death; not becauſe it utterly deſtroys the life of the Sufferer, but becauſe 'tis a continual and *endleſs dying.* The *extreme pains* of Hell may well be called *an everlaſting dying*, or an *eternal Death*; tho' the Sufferer is never extinct.

I do not find any thing in the Books of the Engliſh *Unitarians*, concerning theſe opinions; they may hold as variouſly concerning them as the Chriſtians of other denominations. But if I may anſwer for them, by what I judg of them by converſation with them, I would ſay, we approve the

the doctrine delivered by Arch-biſhop *J. Tillotſon*, in a Sermon before her late Majeſty of happy memory, *March* 7. 1689. on *Matth.* 25. 46. which Sermon was printed by their Majeſties ſpecial Command.

VIII. *I believe, as to Chriſtianity it ſelf, every thing in it is to be ſubmitted to the dictates of* Human Reaſon: *and that there are no Doctrines in it, that are myſterious.*

Neither of theſe was ever ſaid by any *Unitarian*; and all our Prints, more eſpecially thoſe in the Engliſh Tongue, are expreſs, that there are many things, as well in Religion, as Nature, that are far above the capacity of human Reaſon, to declare or underſtand *the manner of 'em*; or how they ſhould be what we either ſee, or are *infallibly* taught they are. We never pretended that the *Human Reaſon is the meaſure of Truth*; as Mr. *Edwards*, and Mr. *Norris* charge us; ſo that what our reaſon does not comprehend, we will not believe on any other evidence whatſoever. We never ſaid it, or thought it; we reject no Doctrines but ſuch as are *contrary to Reaſon*, and of that I ſpeak fully in the anſwer to Mr. *De Luzancy*, hereto annexed.

IX. *As*

IX. *As to Divine Worſhip, I believe it may be given to another beſides God; to Chriſt, who is* but a Creature.

But we have diſavowed nothing more, in all our Prints, than giving Divine Worſhip to any, but only God: that 'tis a marvel to me, that Mr. *Edwards* ſhould impute to us ſuch a doctrine; we have ſcarce any Engliſh Print where we do not expreſly oppoſe it. Nor do we reckon of the Lord Chriſt as *but a Creature*; I have ſaid before, he is *God and Man*. The Divinity did ſo inhabit in the Humanity of Chriſt; doth ſo exert in it the moſt glorious effects of Omnipotence and Omniſcience; that if others have been called God, becauſe *they repreſented God*, Chriſt is to be ſo called, becauſe *he exhibits God*.

X. *I believe, Prayer was not required under the Old Teſtament. The* Lords-day *is a ceremonious Obſervance, aboliſhed by the Goſpel. There is no ſpiritual Bleſſing conferred in the uſe of the Sacraments. Baptiſm is an uſeleſs Rite; and the Baptiſm of Children altogether vain. There is no diſtinct function, or office of Miniſters, in the Chriſtian Church; the very Lord's Supper it ſelf may be adminiſtred by a private perſon.*

I think Mr. *Edwards* is in the right againſt thoſe (if any ſuch there were) who deny'd that Prayer was a duty or precept of the Old Teſtament and the Law; when he ſays, "It is included in the general pre-"cepts of fearing, ſerving, worſhipping "God. But he is as much out in the next Article, that ſome have ſaid, the *Lords-day* is aboliſhed by the Goſpel: for it was never ſaid by any. He meant, I ſuppoſe, that the Seventh-day, or *Sabbath*, is aboliſht: and I take it to be the doctrine of the Catholic Church, that the *Seventh-day-Sabbath* was ceremonial, and is aboliſht. It may better, however, be ſaid, that the Sabbath *is transferred* from the ſeventh to the firſt day; than that 'tis *abſolutely aboliſht*, or taken away. In ſhort, the Engliſh *Unitarians* hold no private opinion about either the Sabbath, or Lord's day; but, as well in principle as practice, concur with the Catholic Church.

It is too looſly ſaid, "That there is no "ſpiritual Bleſſing conferr'd in the uſe of "the Sacraments. For there is no ordinance of God, but the ſerious and devout performance of it draws a bleſſing on the doer. For all that, many exceed in aſcribing to the Sacraments certain Powers and Energies, without competent war-

warrant from the Word of God. I do not know that Baptiſm is any thing more than *a federal Rite*, by which we are initiated into the Chriſtian Religion: or the *Holy Supper* any thing more than *a commemoration of the Sacrifice of Chriſt*, offering himſelf to God as an atonement for repenting ſinners. I know not to what purpoſe ſo many ſuperſtitious Books are written, to teach people how to prepare themſelves for the *Memorial Supper*; when an *honeſt* Intention, and a *reverent* Performance, are ſufficient, both *preparations* and *qualifications*, *for* and *in* all Goſpel-Ordinances. The Apoſtle ſays, *He that eateth that* Bread *unworthily*, *or unworthily drinketh of that* Cup, *is guilty of the blood of Chriſt*; nay, *eateth and drinketh* Judgment *to himſelf*. But he alſo warns them, what he means by *unworthy partaking*, namely, their not tarrying for one another; and withal, eating and drinking with ſo little regard to God or Men, that *ſome of them made themſelves drunk with the Sacramental Wine*, while others could not ſo much as taſt of it. Briefly, their aſſembling to this ſolemn *commemorative Sacrifice*, was more like to *a Carouſal*, than to a celebration of the Holy and Bleſſed memory of a dying Saviour. Theſe were the Diſorders and Irregularities

gularities concerning which they were *to examin themſelves*; and thereby avoid an unworthy Communicating, and the conſequences thereof.

We do not ſay, "Baptiſm is an *uſeleſs* "*Rite*; or that the Baptiſm of Children "is *altogether vain.* What the Wiſdom of God has appointed to *all Nations*, is not to be eſteemed *uſeleſs*; tho' we our ſelves knew not the uſes of it: and it is uſe enough that this Sacrament is *an initiating Rite.*

Nor is it a good Exception againſt this Sacrament's being continued ſtill; that *now* people are Chriſtians *by Education*: Seeing there is the *ſame* reaſon for *its continuance* as for *its inſtitution*, namely, a ſolemn, public, and formal *Initiation into the Religion of Jeſus.* And this may, in ſome ſenſe, be done *in Infancy*, by the intervention of Undertakers, commonly called God-fathers; and how it can be done without 'em I ſee not. But it is without all reaſon, that Parents ſhould not be admitted to be Undertakers, when others *cannot*, or cannot *eaſily* be had. It were well, methinks, if the Miniſter and Church-Wardens (together with the Parents) were obliged to be Undertakers *ex Officio*, or *ratione*

Officii, by their Place and Office; and it were yet better, if the whole Church undertook for the Infants. Moreover, where *Infant-Baptiſm* is the cuſtom of the Church, *Confirmation* (or the perſon's taking upon himſelf the Covenant and Promiſes that were made in his name by his Undertakers) ought to be as little neglected as *Baptiſm*: nay, the perſon cannot be ſaid to be a *compleat Chriſtian*, or to be Chriſtianly baptized, till he is confirmed; that is, has publickly taken upon himſelf his Baptiſmal Engagements.

Pædo-baptiſm, or *Infant-Baptiſm*, and *ſprinkling* inſtead of *dipping*, have occaſioned an unneceſſary Sciſm from the Church; for neither of theſe are Doctrines of the Church, or impoſed on any. The Church requires *dipping*, except in caſe of Neceſſity or Danger. The words of the *Rubric*, in the Office of Baptiſm, are theſe. "If "they (the Godfathers) certify, that the "Child may well endure it: He (the "Miniſter) ſhall *dip* it, dip *the Child*, "in the Water; ſaying, I baptize thee, "*&c.* —But if they certify that the "Child is weak; it ſhall ſuffice to *pour* "*Water upon it.* Neither of theſe is ſprinkling, they are both of them Baptiſm

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(or *Waſhing*) in the ſtricteſt ſenſe of the word. As to Infant-Baptiſm, it doth not certainly appear, that it was not practiſed by the Apoſtles; rather it ſeemeth, that when the Parents were baptized, ſo alſo were the Children: for ſuch was the cuſtom of the *Jews* toward their Proſelites, from whom Baptiſm, the Sacramental Supper, and in a word, all the antient Eccleſiaſtical Rites, and Church-Diſcipline (Hierarchy or Church-Government) was taken by our Saviour and the Apoſtles. Notwithſtanding, for ſatisfaction of ſuch as do not approve Infant-Baptiſm; the Church has an Office, called in the Liturgy, *the Baptiſm of ſuch as are of riper years.* That as I ſaid, the ſciſm of the People and Churches, that are vulgarly called Baptiſts, or Anabaptiſts, ſeems not well grounded.

Laſtly, as to that, " I believe there is " no diſtinct Function or Office of *Mini-* " *ſters:* and that the very Lord's Supper " may be adminiſtred by a private Chri- " ſtian.

I anſwer for my ſelf, and moſt other (if not *all*) Unitarians. There is *a* threefold diſtinction of Church-Officers, by themſelves modeſtly called Miniſters:

namely, Biſhops, Presbyters, or Prieſts and Deacons. The two former ſeem to be of Divine Right: the other of Apoſtolical Inſtitution only; and that too (as appears from *Acts* 6. 3, 4.) not by any particular Inſpiration, but meerly on Motives of Prudence and Charity. Theſe three Orders, Biſhop, Prieſt and Deacon, are of that Antiquity, and Univerſality, that *as ſoon as*, and *whereſoever* Chriſtianity was profeſſed, the Churches were govern'd after this form. A form received among all *the Sects* of Chriſtians, as well as by the ſounder part of 'em, called commonly the Church: till Mr. *Calvin* in *a caſe of Neceſſity*, introduced a new ſort of Church-Adminiſtration. Theſe are they to whom only (except in *caſe of neceſſity*, ſuch as *the Reformation* was) it belongs to adminiſter the Sacraments; and to inſtruct and exhort publickly. But what makes *a caſe of neceſſity*, is a queſtion by it ſelf, on which I do not here enter: I wiſh the Church had not given, or may never give cauſe to the Unitarians, either by Excluſion or Perſecution, or unlawful or over-harſh Terms of Communion, to have recourſe to Mr. *Calvin*'s Expedient.

XI. *As*

XI. *As to moral Points, I believe that* officious Lies *are lawful; the motions of* Concupiſcence *not vitious; idle or obſcene words, Gluttony, Drunkenneſs, Riot, Luxury, and impure Deſires and Luſts, were not forbidden till Chriſt's time.* By *officious Lies* are meant thoſe *Falſities* that do good to ſome, without doing hurt to others; as the Lie of the Hebrew Midwives to *Pharaoh*; the Tale of *Michal* to her Father *Saul*, when ſhe ſuffer'd *David* to eſcape; and *Jonathan*'s feigned excuſe for *David*, when he hid *David* from his Father's Anger, *Exod.* 1. 19. 1 *Sam.* 19. 17. and 20. 6. To officious Lies belong alſo Compliments, very low Bowings, and reſpectful Carriage towards Perſons for whom we have not the kindneſs or regard of which we make ſhow, by thoſe external and *falſe* Significations. I think it may excuſe *Volkelius*, whom Mr. *Edwards* cites for this part of his Charge; that the officious Lies of the Midwives, of *Michal*, and of *Jonathan*, are related in Scripture without blaming them: they are not cenſured by the Inſpired Writers; they are told by the Prophets *Moſes* and *Samuel*, without the leaſt ſignification that they were Sins. *Volkelius* might infer

from hence that the Texts which forbid lying and falſeneſs, are intended of ſuch lying as is *hurtful* or *prejudicial* to others; and that what dos no hurt, can be the Subject of no forbidding Law. To forbid what helps ſome, even to the ſaving of Life or Goods, without any hurt or wrong to another: why ſhould any Law-giver, who reſpects at all the good of his People, ſo enact?

Notwithſtanding, I think Mr. *Edwards* ſays well. "If once ſuch Doctrine is "commonly taught, all Lies will be reckned ſome way or other *officious*; and "Truth and Sincerity will be baniſht "from the Earth.

"The motions of *Concupiſcence* are not "vitious or ſinful. By *Concupiſcence* is meant ſome unlawful Deſire or Inclination, ariſing in the mind; but not conſented to, or put into practice. Methinks, ſo far forth as ſuch Motions in the mind are *involuntary*, they ſhould rather be called Frailties than Sins; and the diſapproving and reſiſting them ſhall be rewarded by God. Concerning "obſcene Words, Riot, "Gluttony, Drunkenneſs, impure Deſires, "not forbidden by *the Law*; and not ſtrictly unlawful, till prohibited by the Goſ-

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" pel: We are not much concerned in ſuch a Diſpute; it being granted on all hands, that they are forbid in the Writings of the New Teſtament. Notwithſtanding, I wonder that any ſhould ſay, they are not prohibited in the Moſaick Law. Some of them were puniſhable with death by that Law: as Gluttony and Drunkenneſs, by the Law at *Deut.* 21. 20. Luxury, Riot, Luſt, and ſuch like, are contrary to the good of a Man's Children, and of himſelf; or of his Neighbor and the Commonwealth; and therefore are implicitly forbid by that Commandment, at *Lev.* 19. 18. which requires that a man ſhould love his Neighbor as himſelf. I do not love my Neighbor as my ſelf, if I am guilty of *Luxury* or *Riot*, by which my *Heir*, and the Poor are defrauded; or if I am guilty of Ambition, Covetouſneſs, or Luſt, by which I ſpoil, or grind, or wrong my Neighbor. Nay, Luſt, Riot, Exceſs, Covetouſneſs, do unfit us, and that very much for the ſervice of God, and for the honeſt and honorable diſcharge of our ſtation, whatſoever that be in the Commonwealth: therefore we may ſay, they are *implicitely* forbidden, by all thoſe Commandments of the Law, that require either the Fear, Regard, and Ser-

namely, Biſhops, Presbyters, or Prieſts and Deacons. The two former ſeem to be of Divine Right: the other of Apoſtolical Inſtitution only; and that too (as appears from *Acts* 6. 3, 4.) not by any particular Inſpiration, but meerly on Motives of Prudence and Charity. Theſe three Orders, Biſhop, Prieſt and Deacon, are of that Antiquity, and Univerſality, that *as ſoon as*, and *whereſoever* Chriſtianity was profeſſed, the Churches were govern'd after this form. A form received among all *the Sects* of Chriſtians, as well as by the ſounder part of 'em, called commonly the Church: till Mr. *Calvin* in *a caſe of Neceſſity*, introduced a new ſort of Church-Adminiſtration. Theſe are they to whom only (except in *caſe of neceſſity*, ſuch as *the Reformation* was) it belongs to adminiſter the Sacraments; and to inſtruct and exhort publickly. But what makes *a caſe of neceſſity*, is a queſtion by it ſelf, on which I do not here enter: I wiſh the Church had not given, or may never give cauſe to the Unitarians, either by Excluſion or Perſecution, or unlawful or over-harſh Terms of Communion, to have recourſe to Mr. *Calvin*'s Expedient.

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"The motions of *Concupiſcence* are not "vitious or ſinful. By *Concupiſcence* is meant ſome unlawful Deſire or Inclination, ariſing in the mind; but not conſented to, or put into practice. Methinks, ſo far forth as ſuch Motions in the mind are *involuntary*, they ſhould rather be called Frailties than Sins; and the diſapproving and reſiſting them ſhall be rewarded by God. Concerning "obſcene Words, Riot, "Gluttony, Drunkenneſs, impure Deſires, "not forbidden by *the Law*; and not ſtrictly unlawful, till prohibited by the Goſ-

"pel:

" pel: We are not much concerned in ſuch a Diſpute; it being granted on all hands, that they are forbid in the Writings of the New Teſtament. Notwithſtanding, I wonder that any ſhould ſay, they are not prohibited in the Moſaick Law. Some of them were puniſhable with death by that Law: as Gluttony and Drunkenneſs, by the Law at *Deut.* 21. 20. Luxury, Riot, Luſt, and ſuch like, are contrary to the good of a Man's Children, and of himſelf; or of his Neighbor and the Commonwealth; and therefore are implicitly forbid by that Commandment, at *Lev.* 19. 18. which requires that a man ſhould love his Neighbor as himſelf. I do not love my Neighbor as my ſelf, if I am guilty of *Luxury* or *Riot*, by which my *Heir*, and the Poor are defrauded; or if I am guilty of Ambition, Covetouſneſs, or Luſt, by which I ſpoil, or grind, or wrong my Neighbor. Nay, Luſt, Riot, Exceſs, Covetouſneſs, do unfit us, and that very much for the ſervice of God, and for the honeſt and honorable diſcharge of our ſtation, whatſoever that be in the Commonwealth: therefore we may ſay, they are *implicitely* forbidden, by all thoſe Commandments of the Law, that require either the Fear, Regard, and Ser-

vice of God; or the welfare and eſteem of our Neighbor or Selves.

XII. *Concerning Magiſtrates, I believe 'tis not lawful for them, under the Goſpel, to inflict Capital Puniſhment* (Death) *on any Offenders; no not on Murderers.*

This was the Doctrine of divers of the Fathers of the three firſt Ages; ſcarce any of 'em believ'd otherwiſe. Nay they added, 'tis not lawful to go to the Wars, as a Souldier or Officer; or to aſſiſt at Executions; or even to defend a Mans own Life, by any ſuch reſiſtance as will take away the Life of the injurious Aggreſſor. The reaſon they gave for this *laſt* was, that by killing a Perſon who attempts to murder me, he is diſpatched out of the world *without Repentance*, and therefore is certainly damn'd: but the Chriſtian, by being killed, loſes only his Life, and enters upon a bleſſed Immortality. Some Unitarians have been of this mind, while others have written againſt the whole Doctrine. In ſhort, it is not their Doctrine, as Unitarians; for ſome of them have held it, while others (I believe, the moſt) diſallow it.

XIII. *Con-*

XIII. *Concerning ſome other points, I believe as the Church of* Rome *believes; for we agree with them in ſeveral points of Doctrin.* What theſe points are, he tells us at *Chap.* 9. from *p.* 201. Namely, *that* ſome things were ſaid by our Saviour, by way only of monition or counſel, not of command. *That* we merit by a good Life, and may be perfect. *That* all Sins are not damnable. *That* the prayers of the living may help the dead. Nay the Author of *the Conſiderations on the Explitions of the Trinity*, ſpeaks favourably of the Tranſubſtantiation.

Let us begin at the foot of this account. The Author of *the Conſiderations*, is no otherwiſe favourable to the Doctrine of the Tranſubſtantiation, than by ſaying of it, " 'Tis only a Philoſophical *Error* or " *Folly*; not an Impiety, *p.* 21. And again, *p.* 22. " 'Tis *a Miſtake* into which " the Papiſts have been cozened by the " Philoſophy of *Ariſtotle*. Would Mr. *Edwards* think a man favoured the Doctrines in his Books, if he gave them no better Names than *Miſtakes*, *Errors* and *Follies*? Mr. *Edwards* finds *Impiety*, *Irreligion*, *Atheiſm*, and what not, in all Doctrines, and all Authors he diſlikes: We are not ſo dextrous. We ſometimes think that

that we ſpy *an Error* or *Miſtake*; and ſometimes it ſeems ſo groſs as to deſerve the name of *a Folly*: but to call it Impiety, Irreligion, Abnegation of Chriſtianity; how much ſoever Mr. *Edwards* delights in it, and makes it his conſtant Practice as well in preaching as writing; we cannot approve the Example, it being always contrary to Charity, good Manners, and Truth.

" The Prayers of the Living may help " the Dead. Mr. *Edwards* quotes for this but one Socinian Writer; nor is that Author poſitive in the caſe. He only ſays; " Thoſe who believe *a middle ſtate* " or place for the Dead, do well to pray " for them: That is, in caſe you ſuppoſe, beſide Heaven and Hell, ſome *middle place* where Souls may repent and reform, or are any otherwiſe capable of mercy, or where they have not yet received their laſt Doom: It is Charity to interceed by our Prayers for them, as much as we would for the Living. I believe he is the only Writer of his Sect, that can be charged with any ſuch thing: but we have it in print, concerning a late Archbiſhop of *Canterbury*, Dr. *Sheldon*; that he prayed for the Dead in his *daily Prayers*. But what one particular Man dos or ſays, is

not

not to be imputed to his whole Party, and reported to the whole world *as an Article of their Creed.*

" All Sins are *not damnable.* A Chri-
" ſtian *may merit* by his good works, and
" may *be perfect.* *Merit* and *Perfection* may be *truly* or *falſly* ſaid of the works and life of a Chriſtian man; according as you interpret the terms Merit and Perfection. Taking 'em in the ſenſe that Proteſtants uſe them; no Man can merit of God, the infinite Recompences of Heaven, and of Bleſſedneſs everlaſting: nor was any Man perfect, or without Sin; but only *that Lamb of God that taketh away the Sins of the world.* But Merit and Perfection are ſometimes uſed in a popular ſenſe; namely for that, tho imperfect, yet *ſincere Obedience* to God's Commandments, to which God has graciouſly appointed *the recompence* of everlaſting Bleſſedneſs in Heaven: and for *univerſal Obedience,* as it is oppoſed (not to Overſights and Frailties, but) a *wilful indulging* our ſelves in particular Sins. In this ſenſe every ſincere Chriſtian both *merits* and *is perfect.* Yet, I own that divers Unitarian Writers have ſpoke either too looſly, or too incorrectly on the point of Perfection; but they have been as much oppoſed, by ſome of their own number.

number. The ſame cannot be ſaid, concerning the diſtinction of Sin into mortal and venial; for our People are poſitive and unanimous, that as St. *John* words this matter, *there is a Sin which is not unto death*, 1ª John 5. 16. God Almighty, they ſay, has not appointed Hell-fire to our Frailties and Inadvertences; but to our *Contempts* and *adviſed Breach* of his Laws.

" Some things ſaid by our Saviour, " are Counſels to ſuch as would be per- " fect; not abſolute indiſpenſible Com- " mands to all the Faithful without ex- " ception. He quotes for this, an obſcure paſſage of one ſingle Socinian Writer, who never was eſpouſed in that matter by any of his Party. We judg that the diſtinction of Counſels and Commands, is a great and very dangerous Preſumption; a back-door by which to eſcape from almoſt a mans whole Duty. The two Doctrines of *Counſels for the perfect* and *probable Opinions*, will furniſh the moſt profligate Wretch in the world, with defences and excuſes for his very greateſt Enormities.

Laſtly, after all, I believe, *Tho the aforeſaid Articles are all of 'em neceſſary to make a Man* a Socinian: *yet the belief of only one of*

of them, is enough to make a Man a Chriſtian; *and that one Article is,* that Jeſus is the Meſſias: *In which it is not included, whether he be* God *or* Man, *or whether he ſatisfied Divine* Juſtice *for our Sins by* his Death; *but only that a Man of* Nazareth *was ordained, and ſent by God to be a Saviour.*

I ſee all Mr. *Edwards* his Colts-teeth are not yet out of his head; he cannot forbear dealing ſometimes in Railery and Wit: but I muſt ſeriouſly deſire him to name me any Socinian or Unitarian Writer that ever ſaid, no more is required to make *a Chriſtian,* but only that he believe *Jeſus is the Meſſias.* The truth of the matter is this; Mr. *Edwards* has been lately very much foiled, firſt by a Learned Gentleman, then by a Divine of the Church of *England,* upon this Queſtion; "Whether it be of the eſſence of a Chri-"ſtian *as a Chriſtian,* to aſſent to more "than this one Article, that *Jeſus is the* "*Meſſias, ſent by God to inſtruct and ſave* "*the World?* They do not doubt that 'tis a Chriſtians duty to learn (by degrees) all the other Articles of the Chriſtian Creed, and to believe them; but if he hath attained, or (by occaſion of *whatſoever Impediments,* that were not cauſed by

by his own *Negligence* or *Perverſneſs)* he can attain to more either Knowledg or Faith; yet this one Article doth make him a Chriſtian. It doth not ſatisfy Mr. *Edwards*, that upon all the points in queſtion, they have declared themſelves to be Anti-Socinians: he reſolves for all that they ſhall be *Socinians*; and this opinion which they maintain againſt him, *a new Article* of the Socinian Creed. It may be one way he thinks to reduce 'em to ſilence, if he calls their opinion Socinianiſm: and if after that they will not pull in their Horns, it ſhall be Irreligion or downright Atheiſm, or at leaſt abnegation of Chriſtianity or Popery; his other Compliments to thoſe whom he is pleaſed to attack.

I have now anſwered concerning all the Articles of our Religion with ſincerity, without any the leaſt diſguiſe; or reſerved or unuſual meaning or meanings. And I am not ſorry that Mr. *Edwards* almoſt conſtrained us to explain our ſelves concerning theſe points. For as unſincere and untrue as his Imputations are, and as ſcurrilous as his manner of repreſenting them and diſcourſing upon them ſometimes is: the Retortion or Anſwer here made, will be judged by indifferent and diſcerning Perſons, to be home and ſatisfactory.

As

As to the man himſelf, Mr. *Edwards* has been ſerviceable to the common Chriſtianity, by divers learned Books: therefore I wiſh to him whatſoever good, himſelf deſires to himſelf, theſe Concertations between us notwithſtanding.

THIS *Scheme* as it expreſſes the real Sentiments of the *Socinians*; ſo it perfectly agrees with the Doctrine of the Catholick Church, and of the Church of *England*: ſaving that in the fourth Article, concerning *Original Sin*, *Freewill* and *Grace*, the Anſwer is not ſo explicit and direct as it would have been if Mr. *Edwards* had not affectedly declined to declare and expreſs the Doctrine of the Church concerning thoſe matters. In their firſt Riſe, the Unitarians followed the Doctrine of St. *Auſtin*, and Mr. *Calvin*, in the Article of *Original Sin*; and the depending Articles, *Free-will* and the *Grace* of God: but *F. Socinus* coming into *Tranſilvania*, and then into *Poland*, revived among 'em *the Pelagian Doctrine*; ſo that for about an Age they were *Pelagians*, in the queſtion of *Original Sin*, and its *Dependents*. In this laſt Century, as they ſpeak, or Age, being the ſeventeenth from the birth of our Saviour, thoſe Queſtions have

have received a new turn in all the Western Churches: that is to say, among the Roman Catholicks; and the Protestants of all denominations. A kind of *Semipelagianism* is grown into repute in most places, being a temper or expedient of Peace, both Parties yielding somewhat; and yet both retaining enough to make their Doctrine consistent with our natural Notions of the *Justice* and *Mercy* of God. And to this I think the Unitarians now rather incline; but not generally, that is, not universally, or not *all of them.*

In short, the above-recited Scheme is *direct* and clear: except only in the fourth Article concerning Original Sin; and the Points thereon depending. But those Questions being now *variously* held in all Churches, and among all Parties: the *Socinians* are no more Dissenters on the account of what some, or most of them believe concerning that Article; than Bishop *Jer. Taylor* (for instance) and Dr. *Hammond*, and the *Remonstrant Party*, supposed to be the greater part of the Church of *England*, are. So that upon the whole we may say, *There is now no Socinian Controversy.* The misunderstanding that was common to both Parties, the Church and the Unitarians, is annihilated: and Mr. *Firmin*,

Firmin, by approving and publiſhing the Scheme of Agreement, *profeſſed* himſelf of the ſame mind with the Catholick Church, and the Church of *England*.

Mr. *Firmin* was ſenſible of this; notwithſtanding as Curator of the Unitarian Religion, he reſolved to have continued his endeavours, that no *falſe* Notion of *the Trinity* ſhould corrupt the ſincere Faith of *the Unity*. He was perſwaded that the Faith of the Unity is the firſt Article of Chriſtianity; the Article that diſtinguiſhes Chriſtians from Pagans: as the belief of *the Meſſiah already come*, diſtinguiſhes us from *Jews*. He judged that tho the unſcriptural terms *Trinity*, *three Divine Perſons*, and ſuch like, *in the ſenſe they are intended by the Church*, contain a Doctrine which is true; yet taken *in the ſenſe they bear in common familiar Speech*, in which ſenſe the greater number of men (almoſt all the unlearned) muſt needs underſtand them; they imply a more groſs and abſurd Polytheiſm, than any of the old Heathens were guilty of. He that underſtands three Divine *Perſons* to be three (diſtinct, infinite, all-perfect) *Spirits* or *Beings* or *Minds*, three *Creators*, three ſeveral Objects of Worſhip, is more guilty of Polytheiſm, than the

Greeks or *Romans* ever were before their converſion to Chriſtianity: for tho they and other Nations were Heathens, that is, Polytheiſts, Aſſerters of more Gods; yet they never believed more than *one Infinite All-perfect Spirit*, the Father and King of the *leſſer Deities*. Mr. *Firmin* knew well that the Majority of vulgar Chriſtians, and not a few Learned Men, have a Tritheiſtick Notion or Conception of the *Trinity*, or three Divine Perſons, each of which is God: namely, that they are three diſtinct Infinite All-perfect *Minds* or *Spirits*. Meeting this every day in Converſation as well as in Books; he was not leſs zealous for the Doctrine of the Unity, after the Publication of the Scheme of Agreement, than before. And therefore he purpoſed, beſides the continuation of all his former Efforts, to hold Aſſemblies for Divine Worſhip, diſtinct from the Aſſemblies of any other denomination of Chriſtians. But he did not intend theſe Aſſemblies or Congregations by way of ſciſm or ſeparation from the Church; but only *as Fraternities in the Church*, who would undertake a more eſpecial care of that Article, for the ſake of which 'tis certain both the *Teſtaments* were written. The great deſign and ſcope of both Teſtaments,

ments, and the reaſon that they were given by God, was to regain Mankind to the belief and acknowledgment of *but one God:* to deſtroy Polytheiſm of all ſorts. Mr. *Firmin* intended to recommend it to the Unitarian Congregations, as the very reaſon of their diſtinct aſſembling; to be particularly mindful of, and zealous for, the Article of the Unity; to cauſe it to be ſo explained in their Aſſemblies, Catechiſms and Books (without denying, or ſo much as ſuppreſſing the Catholick Doctrine of the Trinity) that all men might eaſily and readily know in what ſenſe *the Unity of God* is to be believed, and the Myſtery of *a Trinity of Divine Perſons (each of them God)* is to be interpreted. Mr. *Firmin* feared, that without ſuch Aſſemblies, the continual uſe of terms, which *in their ordinary ſignification* are confeſſed by all to imply three Gods, would paganize in ſome time the whole Chriſtian Church; which is Heathen already in the majority of its Members, by occaſion of thoſe terms: and that no ſufficient care is taken to interpret them to the people.

I thought to have ended here; but the Dean of St. *Pauls* having publiſhed a large Book in Quarto, to which he gives the title of *the preſent ſtate of the* Socinian *Con-*

Dr Sherlock

troverſy: I think my ſelf obliged to take notice of it, and make a fit Anſwer to it. In order whereunto, it will be even neceſſary to conſider alſo, briefly, his former Books: indeed my Anſwer will be little more than a comparing the Doctrine of theſe Books with this laſt; in which, as to his Notions, (tho propos'd commonly in ſomewhat improper, unconvenient, and dangerous expreſſions) he has given ſatisfaction to Dr. *S----th*, and the *Oxford* Heads; in other words, he is become truly Catholic, and perfectly Unitarian.

Mr. *Firmin* had cauſed to be written *a brief Hiſtory of the Unitarians*, and *brief Notes on the Creed of* Athanaſius, in the years 1689 and 1690. Dr. *Sherlock* was then more at leiſure than he deſired; ſo he anſwered in a wrathful Book, entituled, *A Vindication of the Doctrine of the H. Trinity*. In this Vindication he lays about him for that ſort of Trinity, that had been oppos'd in the aforeſaid Hiſtory and Notes: a Trinity of (Infinite, Eternal, All-perfect) *Minds*, *Beings*, and *Spirits*. The Doctrine of his Book, may be ſumm'd into this following ſhort Abſtract.

" The H. Trinity is three *ſuch* Perſons " as are *ſubſtantially diſtinct*; or are *three* " *diſtinct Spiritual Subſtances*. Being di-

" ſtinct

" ſtinct *Perſons*, they muſt needs be di-
" ſtinct *Subſtances*; *Perſons* and *intelligent*
" *Subſtances*, being reciprocal terms, or
" ſignifying the ſame thing. The Divine
" Perſons are three *Beings*, three *Spirits*,
" three *Minds*, as diſtinct as three human
" Perſons, as diſtinct as *Peter*, *James*, and
" *John*. Each of theſe Minds or Spirits
" has a diſtinct *Underſtanding*, *Wiſdom*,
" and *Will*, of his own; a diſtinct abſo-
" lutely-perfect *Wiſdom*, *Goodneſs*, and
" *Power*; *for theſe perfections may be, and*
" *are, in more than one.* And as each of
" them is an all-perfect Spirit; each of
" them alſo is *a God*. Yet are they not
" three Gods; becauſe being internally
" conſcious to each others thoughts and
" actions: by means of this *mutual conſci-*
" *ouſneſs*, tho they are three all-perfect
" Spirits, and each of them *a God*, they
" are but one God.

If we will ſay truth, Dr. *Sherlock* was no more overſeen in this explication of the Trinity, than the principal Divines and Preachers at *London*, and both Univerſities. To my knowledg, they upbraided Mr. *Firmin* with this Book of Dr. *Sherlock*'s: and ſome of them told him; If Dr. *Sherlock*'s Book did not reclame him from his Hereſy, it would riſe up in Judgment a-

gainſt him. It came forth *cum licentiâ ſuperiorum:* and ſhortly after, the Doctor was reſtored to all his Preferments, which he had forfeited by refuſing the Oaths to the Government; with the addition of the Deanary of St. *Pauls.*

But neither the Canonical Licenſe, nor the new and great Preferment, nor the approbations and applauſes from ſo many (and ſo conſiderable) Fautors, could prevent a moſt terrible after-clap. For to ſay nothing of the Anſwer, firſt by the Socinians, and then by Dr. *S----th*; the Heads of Colleges at *Oxford*, *Nov.* 25. 1695, made and ordered the publication of this Cenſure and Decree. " Theſe words, *there* " *are three diſtinct* Minds *and* Subſtances " *in the Trinity*; and theſe words, *the* " *three Perſons in the Trinity, are three di-* " *ſtinct infinite* Minds *or* Spirits, *and three* " *individual Subſtances*; are Erroneous, He- " retical, and Impious. And we require " all perſons, who are committed to our " inſtitution or care, that they affirm no " ſuch Doctrine, either by preaching or " otherwiſe.

When this Decree came abroad, Dr. *Sherlock*'s former Abettors deſerted him in whole troops: and now they ſaid, Univerſities ſpeak but ſeldom, and by way of Authority,

Authority, without giving the reaſons of their Decrees; but as they interpoſe but rarely, and in important Caſes, 'tis always with certainty. In ſhort, from this time, Doctor *Sherlock* was left almoſt alone. That I know of, the ſame Doctors, Dignitaries, Deans, Biſhops, who had boaſted of his Book (not only as orthodox, but) as unanſwerable; now tackt about, and as much approved the *Oxford*-Decree. The moſt now ſaid, it was even neceſſary to make and publiſh the Decree: *Tritheiſm* being ſo much worſe than *Sabellianiſm* or *Socinianiſm*, as Paganiſm or *Heatheniſm* is worſe than mere *Judaiſm*; there is no body but will prefer the faith of the Jews, tho' ſo unperfect, before the many Gods of the Heathens. Dr. *Sherlock* was often told of theſe murmurs, and that they were grown general: his anſwer was, that *he was ſure that he was in the right.* And accordingly he ſhortly publiſhed his *Examination of the* Oxford-*Decree*. In this *Examination* he often repeats his former doctrine. He ſays, for inſtance, P. 46. " Theſe *Decreeing* and " *Hereſy-making* Heads of Colleges, have " condemned the *true* Catholic Faith, the " *Nicene* Faith, and the Faith of the " Church of *England*. He adds in the ſame page, " Three *Divine* Perſons, who

" are not three distinct Minds and Subſtan-
" ces, is not greater *Hereſy*, than 'tis
" *Nonſenſe*.

P. 31. " The preſent diſpute is about
" *three diſtinct infinite* Minds *and* Subſtan-
" ces *in the Trinity*; whether this be Ca-
" tholic doctrine, and Catholic language?
" If it appears that they (*the Fathers*)
" owned three diſtinct *Subſtances*, both
" name and thing; there can be no di-
" ſpute about three *Minds*.

P. 23. " If God begets no *ſubſtance*, he
" begets nothing that is *real*; ——And
" then, neither is God a *real* Father, nor
" the Son a *real* Son.

P. 22. " If a Divine Perſon, *as a Per-*
" *ſon*, and *as a diſtinct Perſon* from the
" other two Perſons, be not *an infinite*
" *Mind*; there is an end of the Chriſtian
" Trinity.

P. 18. " The three Perſons muſt be as
" diſtinct Minds, Spirits, and Subſtances,
" as they are diſtinct Perſons.

Every body diſliked this Anſwer to the *Oxford* Heads; it was owned to be Hereſy, *in excelſis*: Dr. *Sherlock*'s more warm Oppoſers call'd out for the ſitting of *a Convocation*, to cenſure ſuch a manifeſt ſubverſion of the Catholic Faith, in the firſt and chief Article of it. The Doctor however

was

was ſtill conſtant to his Doctrine; he perſevered in his former *I am ſure that I am in the right.*

Shortly after came forth *the judgment of a diſintereſted Perſon, concerning the Controverſy between Dr.* S---TH *and Dr.* SHERLOCK. This Author ſtates the Doctrines of the Trinity, and the Incarnation or Divinity of our Saviour, as they have been for many Ages held in the Catholic Church: and proves his explication of them, by a great number of inconteſtable Authorities, eſpecially of General Councils. He evinces by divers clear (both Theological and Philoſophical) Reaſons: that three infinite ſpiritual *Subſtances*, three eternal all-perfect *Beings*, *Minds*, or *Spirits*, are moſt certainly three *Gods*. He concludes that Dr. *S—th* and the *Oxford* Heads are undoubtedly in the right, in cenſuring the Doctrine of three infinite all-perfect ſpiritual Subſtances, Spirits, Minds or Beings, as Tritheiſm; yet that Dr. *Sherlock* had no ill meaning; for he only propoſed to himſelf to defend the received Doctrines of the Trinity and Incarnation, tho he unhappily miſtook in the explication of thoſe Doctrines. One may ſay this Book is perfectly well written,

ten, the Catholic Doctrine is truly ſtated and aſſerted by the very Authorities and Reaſons on which it has been ſo long and ſo generally received: and tho the Author is conſtrained by the evidence of the proofs which he alledges, to aſſent to the *Oxford*-Heads, and to Dr. *S——th*; yet he always ſpeaks of Dr. *Sherlock*, not only with much tenderneſs, but with a great deal of reſpect and deference.

Dr. *Sherlock* on the contrary, anſwers with ſo much virulence, as if the Author had done to him ſome perſonal irreparable, or even mortal Injury: and with ſo much ſelf-conceit and confidence, as if himſelf had obtained the monopolies of Learning and good ſenſe.

He intitles his anſwer to *the diſintereſted*, "The Doctrine of a *real* Trinity vindi-"cated, in anſwer to *a Socinian Pamphlet*. As if it were Socinianiſm to oppoſe Tritheiſm.

He begins his Book with theſe words. "This Author calls himſelf *a Presbyter of* "*the Church of England*: I pray God to "preſerve the Church from ſuch Presby-"ters, who eat her Bread, and betray her "Faith. His other *Sippets* are, *Socinian Heretic*, *bantering Socinian*, and ſuch like *Sweets*, with which this Doctor's diſhes are always enchaced. But

But to let those matters pass, in this Answer he recites the Authorities and Reasons urged by *the disinterested*; and in a Paragraph or two bestowed on *each* of them, he triumphs at last gloriously over *all* of them. But what is very surprizing; tho he confutes all the Reasons, and baffles all the Authorities in the whole Book, yet 'tis in this very Answer that he begins to bethink him, and retracts all his Heterodoxies; nay becomes altogether of the same mind with the Author against whom he writes. Let us hear what he says.

Pag. 12. " The Nominals *(i. e.* Dr. " *S——th* and the *Oxford*-Heads) and the " *Socinians* differ in some *forms of Speech*, " but there is no considerable difference in " their *Faith.*

P. 6. " These Phrases, three *Minds*, " three *Spirits*, three *Substances*, ought " to be used very cautiously, and not with- " out great necessity.

P. 14. " They are Expressions liable " to a very heretical sense, to Arianism " and Tritheism.

P. 30. " In the common acceptation " of the word, *the Divine Persons are not* " *three Substances*; but *one* Substance actu- " ally and really subsisting *thrice.* He meant to say, *three manner of ways*; subsist- ing *thrice* is nonsense. *P.* 35.

P. 35. " The Trinity is one ſupream " *Being*; this is the Doctrine of St. *Auſtin*, " the Schools and Fathers. Can any one ſay Dr. *Sherlock* hath not given ſatisfaction to the *Oxford*-Heads, and Dr. *S——th?* Were *F. Socinus*, *Smalcius*, *Crellius*, and *Ruarus* to judg of this Doctrine, they would be content it ſhould be inſerted into their Racovian Catechiſm, they would embrace the Author as an abſolute Unitarian.

P. 36. " Father, Son and Spirit are " τὸ αὐτὸ πρᾶγμα, one and the ſame *Sub-* " *ſtance*; they are τῆς αὐτότητος ἕνωσις, the " unity of Sameneſs or *Identity*: This is " true Catholick Doctrine, and the Lan- " guage of the Nicene Fathers: And of all the *Socinians*, from *F. Socinus* to Mr. *T. F.* But we ſhall hear by and by he will confeſs that alſo.

P. 61. " Three infinite *Perſons*, each " of which is *Mind* and *Spirit*, are but " one and the ſame infinite and eternal " Spirit. Catholick again, and Unitarian all over: For when the Church ſays, each Divine Perſon is Mind and Spirit; the meaning is, the Divine Perſons are internal *relative Properties*, of the *ſame* infinite Mind and Spirit: and being ſo, each of them indeed is Mind and Spirit, but not *a* Mind or *a* Spirit. Had Dr. *Sher-*

lock

lock but known this in time, he had never wrote againſt the Unitarians, nor fallen under the *Oxford*-Cenſure.

P. 65. " The *Socinians* will grant that " one Divinity is but one God: and the " reaſon why they aſſert that *one God is* " *but one Perſon*, is, becauſe they think it " impoſſible the ſame *undivided* Divinity " ſhould ſubſiſt *diſtinctly* in three Perſons. " But then before they had charged the " Faith of the Trinity with Tritheiſm, " they ſhould have remembred, that the " Perſons of the Trinity are not three " *ſuch* Perſons as *their* one Perſon is, " whom they call one God: and therefore " tho three *ſuch* Perſons, three ſuch Minds, " Spirits and Subſtances, as *their* one " Perſon and one Spirit is, (who is the " whole Divinity confined to one ſingle " Perſon) would indeed be three Gods; " yet three *ſuch* Perſons as the Catholic " Church owns, who are all *the ſame* " *One Subſtance*, are not three Gods. The ſhort of this is, the Church doth not mean by three Perſons, what the *Socinians* mean; if ſhe did, they would rightly accuſe her of *Tritheiſm*; three ſuch Perſons as the *Socinians* oppoſe are indeed *three Gods*. He repeats the ſame thing, *p.* 67, in theſe words: " The three Divine Per-

" ſons

" ſons, *as we have now explained them*, are " not three *ſuch* Perſons; as the *Socinians* " muſt confeſs three Perſons muſt be who " are three Gods. Right, for you have now acknowledged that what you call *three Perſons* is indeed τὸ αὐτὸ πρᾶγμα, *one ſelf-ſame ſpiritual Subſtance*, τῆς αὐτότητος ἑνώσεις, *the Unity of Indentity, one ſupream Being, one and the ſame infinite and eternal Spirit:* which in all your former Books, was *Nonſenſe* and *Hereſy*, and *not greater Nonſenſe than Hereſy*; as they who pleaſe may ſee in the places I have quoted, and in above forty other places of your Writings. I ſhall tell you not only the *Oxford*-Heads, or Dr. *S*——*th*, but *F. Socinus* or *T. F.* would never have required you to ſay more than you now ſay: it was not the Trinity held by the Catholic Church, that *Socinus* or *T. F.* rejected; but only a Trinity of *ſuch* Divine Perſons, as are *diſtinct* Subſtances, Spirits and Minds, which (at length) you alſo expreſly diſown: but which too many in the Church, miſled by the dangerous unſcriptural terms, now ſo much contended for, *did* and *do* hold. There can never be a ſincere Peace, till thoſe terms are diſcarded. For tho after eight years Diſputation, a Doctor of Divinity and a Dean has been hardly perſwaded

ed out of the Hereſy of three Spirits, Minds or Subſtances: yet the continuance of theſe unſcriptural Terms, without an exact Explication of them in Sermons and Catechiſms, *heathenizes* all the common People, nay and great numbers of not unlearned perſons.

'Tis evident now I ſuppoſe to every body, that the *Diſintereſted* was not concerned to reply to ſuch an Anſwer as this. Dr. *Sherlock* indeed confuted moſt plainly all his Reaſons, and trampled upon his Authorities: but kindly granted him the Doctrine for which he contended.

I was in hope therefore all the duſt and noiſe had been at an end; but Dr. *Sherlock*, who has no mercy on a conquer'd Enemy, thought fit to make a new Onſet. He publiſht a Sermon, concerning *the danger of corrupting the Faith by Philoſophy*: in which with a great deal of bitterneſs, and many Invectives againſt the Unitarians, he declares, that, "The Unitarian "(and all other Hereſies) have their riſe "and ſtrength from Philoſophy and Rea- "ſon. He pretends that Religion muſt be learned, and taught only from Holy Scripture; not indeed from the meer Letter or Phraſe of Holy Scripture, without allowance for Metaphors, and ſuch like Schemes

Schemes of Speech; but from the obvious and natural ſenſe of the words of Scripture; without preſuming to mollify or change in the leaſt, what ſeems to be the proper ſenſe of the words, on the account of any Oppoſition thereto by Reaſon or Philoſophy. He takes occaſion here to declame againſt Reaſon and Philoſophy, as moſt dangerous Deceits and Impoſtures, the true Originals and Cauſes of all Hereſies and Errors in Religion. His topicks of Argument for theſe things, are the ſame that have been always advanced by the maintainers of Tranſubſtantiation, & other ſuch like Doctrines; which have been rejected by the Proteſtant Churches, on the account that they are flatly contrary to Reaſon and Philoſophy. This Sermon had been out but a little time, when Mr. *Firmin* publiſht *Remarks* on it. The Author of the *Remarks*, firſt makes an Abſtract or Summary of the Sermon; and then examins part by part, the ſaid Summary or Abſtract. He proves, that the uſe of Philoſophy and Reaſon is even neceſſary for the right underſtanding of Holy Scripture, or of any other Book or Speech whatſoever; and that 'tis by Reaſon, which is no other thing but *common ſenſe*, and by Philoſophy, which is nothing but *experimental Knowledg*,

Knowledg, that we can judg when a Book (confeſt on all hands to be true and certain) ſpeaks figuratively and popularly, and when ſtrictly, grammatically and literally. In a word, 'tis by Reaſon and Philoſophy chiefly, that the true meaning and intention of any Book, which Book or Writing is granted to be certainly true, can be found.

The *Remarks* are ſo written, that Dr. *Sherlock* thinks fit to deny, that his Sermon is truly repreſented; he ſays in his *Vindication of the Sermon*, "The Author of the *Remarks*, gives the ſenſe of "my Sermon in his own words, and directly contrary to my meaning.—I who "made the Sermon knew nothing of it "but by mere gueſs, as it lays in his Abſtract. *Vind. p.* 4. He adds again, at *p.* 28. "The Author of the *Remarks* has "not oppoſed the Doctrine of my Sermon; but his own Chimeras and Follies. In ſhort, the Doctor complains, that his whole Sermon is miſreported by the Author of the *Remarks*; and that it was not at all his Intention in the Sermon, to ſpeak againſt Philoſophy or Reaſon, but only againſt what *ſome men call Philoſophy and Reaſon*; and againſt *vain pretences to Reaſon and Philoſophy*, Vind. p. 5. He quotes two or three mincing paſſages of

his Sermon, which ſpeak not of Philoſophy and Reaſon, but of *Pretenders* and *Pretences* to Reaſon and Philoſophy; and theſe two or three Paſſages he offers as the true and *whole* intention of his Sermon. But,

It is certain, himſelf had other thoughts of the intention of his Sermon, when he publiſh'd it, and before he ſaw it confuted: for he gives it this Title, *The danger of corrupting Religion by Philoſophy*; not by *Pretenders*, or *Pretences to Philoſophy*.

'Tis certain alſo, that the Arguments he alledges are directed againſt Philoſophy it ſelf, and Reaſon it ſelf; as every one ſees in the Sermon, and in the Vindication of it. He has (for inſtance) this paſſage, laugh'd at by ſo many. *If* a Contradiction *to fallible* Senſe, *be not a good objection againſt the truth of any thing; how comes* a Contradiction *to much more fallible* Reaſon, *to be an unanſwerable objection?* Vind. p. 14.

Farther, when he is explaining his Text, he ſays. " *Beware, leſt any ſpoil you thro'* " *Philoſophy and vain Deceit*; that is, " *thro' the vain deceit of Philoſophy: Phi-* " *loſophy cheats men with a flattering but* " *falſe appearance.* It may unſettle weak " minds, but cannot lay a ſure or ſolid " foundation

" foundation for Faith; it may cheat men " out of their Faith, but, when that is " done, can give nothing in the room of " it. *Serm. p.* 2. He has divers such paſſages, addreſſed directly againſt Reaſon and Philoſophy: but after the *Remarks* on thoſe paſſages came abroad, he thought (it ſhould ſeem) that, ſeeing what he had ſo haſtily ſaid could no ways be defended, his beſt way would be to deny that ever he ſaid or intended it. He thought, perhaps, it would be a leſs loſs of Reputation, if two or three prying malicious Fellows will read the Sermon again, and thereby diſcover either that the Doctor had forgot himſelf, or would venture (in a ſtreight) on an apparent falſity; than to make himſelf contemptible to learned and diſcerning Men, by pertinacy in Opinions that had been ſo clearly refuted. I leave it to others to judg whether this were an exact Computation.

But, I think, I had not mentioned this Sermon, or its Vindication, but that here again the Doctor calls in his Heterodoxies concerning the Trinity. He diſowns here the expreſſion *three infinite Minds and Spirits*, as very inconvenient, and liable to an heretical Interpretation: it ought not to be uſed, he ſaith, in *the abſolute*; but only

in *a qualified* and *reſtrained Senſe.* His words are, *I freely acknowledg, that* three infinite Minds and Spirits, *is liable to a* very Heretical *and* Tritheiſtic Senſe, *if underſtood* abſolutely. *Serm. p.* 3. But this was never acknowledged till *the Judgment by the Diſintereſted,* and the *Remarks,* had extorted it from him.

I come now to his third and *laſt book of Retractations,* his *preſent ſtate of the Socinian Controverſy*; which, as 'tis much larger than any of the reſt, ſo 'tis more expreſs and direct againſt the Hereſy of three infinite eternal Minds, Spirits, Beings, or Subſtances. 'Tis alſo written ſo much more calmly, than any former piece by the ſame hand; that I could ſcarce believe it was Doctor *Sherlock*'s. Abating a little grumbling of the gizard againſt Dr. *S---th* and the *Oxford* Heads, for former harſhneſs and irreverence; and a ſmall aking of the teeth againſt the unpardonable *Socinians,* the Cauſers (or however the Occaſioners) of all our Misfortunes: the book is wrote in a reaſonable and pacific manner; the only book of a great many, ſo written by this Author. I will preſent the Reader with the Doctrine of this remarkable and uſeful Book, under diſtinct heads; that every

very one may see he hath entirely chang'd his opinions, that were censured by the *Oxford* Heads, and refuted by the *Unitarians*.

First, concerning God; what is *the definition of God*, and of what sort is *the Divine Unity*? He answers;

P. 25. *This is the notion that* all mankind *have of one God*, one infinite eternal Being, or Nature.

P. 35. God is an eternal infinite Mind. *So* all, *as well Christians as Philosophers, hold.*

P. 49. *What is* the natural Notion *we have of God? But* one eternal Being, *the cause of all other Beings.*

P. 309. *They (the Divine Persons) are* as perfectly One, as a created Mind is.

P. 319. *A Perichoresis, Union, or mutual Inbeing of minds, can never make three compleat absolute Minds to be essentially one.*

P. 343. Three (*absolute, whole, individual*) Divine Natures, is Tritheism.

P. 371. *The Divine Persons* cannot properly be called three infinite Minds or Spirits. *For Mind, as well as God, is not the name of their persons; but of their nature, which is* identically the same *in all three.*

We ſee here, he propounds the Doctrine of the Church, and of the Unitarians, both Affirmatively and Negatively; and both ways makes it his own. In defining or deſcribing God, he ſaith, one God is *one* infinite *BEING*, *one* eternal and infinite *MIND*: And tho' we ſay three Divine *Perſons*, yet (whatever is thereby meant, and he will tell us by and by what is meant) they are *as perfectly one MIND, as a created mind is one.* Then Negatively he ſays, The Divine Perſons are not three Minds or Spirits: and as to what ſome ſay, and himſelf had often ſaid in former Books of the *Perichoreſis*, he now owns no mutual *Inbeing* of three Spirits or Minds, can ever make them to be one.

In accounting for the nature of the Divine *Perſons*, he ſpeaks the very language of *the Diſintereſted*, of the Author of the *Remarks*; and of *the Agreement* that was wrote in anſwer to Mr. *Edwards*, to my Lords the Biſhops of *Sarum*, *Chicheſter*, *Worceſter*, and to Monſieur *de Luzanzy*. His words are theſe.

P. 256. *We acknowledg one God, diſtinguiſhed* only *by theſe* perſonal Properties, *Paternity*, *Filiation*, *Proceſſion*; *as each of them has a compleat Hypoſtaſis*, diſtinguiſh'd only by MODES *of ſubſiſtence.*

P. 258.

P. 258. *The Divine Nature ſubſiſts diſtinctly in three; according to their diſtinct characters of* Unbegotten, Begotten, *and* Proceeding. *And theſe we call* Perſons, *becauſe they have* ſome Analogy (or likeneſs) *to individuals in created Beings; which, in an* Intelligent *nature, are called* Perſons. P. 197. *We muſt uſe ſuch words as we have; and* qualify their ſenſe, *as we can.*

P. 259. *When we diſtinguiſh between* Perſon *and* Eſſence; *and ſay there are* three *Perſons and* one *Eſſence: By one* Eſſence, *we mean one* Divinity; *by* Perſons *we mean the Divine Eſſence* as *unbegotten, and* as *communicated by* Generation *and* Proceſſion.

P. 280. *Tho each Divine* Perſon *is the Divine* Nature *and* Eſſence; *yet three Divine Perſons are not three Natures or Eſſences, but* three Relations in one ſingular abſolute Nature.

P. 297. *That one* Nature *is but one* Perſon, *and one Perſon but one Nature; that individual Natures and Perſons muſt always be multiplyed with each other, is the fundamental Principle of all Hereſies, relating either to the Trinity or the Incarnation.*

Sure this laſt effort was a very hard and grievous ſtrain to him; for 'twas the very principle that miſled him into the Hereſy of three ſpiritual infinite Subſtances, Minds

and Beings. He took it for his foundation, that *Persons* and intelligent Natures or *Substances*, are convertible, or are the same: and this error made him obstinate in it, even after the *Oxford* Decree, that the Divine Persons are so many distinct spiritual Substances, distinct Spirits and Minds.

Well, but let us put together this whole *reformed Doctrine*, about the Divine Persons. They are not distinct *Beings*, *Natures*, *Substances*, *Minds*, or *Spirits*; but only *personal Properties*, or *distinct Relations in the same singular nature*. Would you know *the Mystery* more particularly, what you are to understand by personal *Properties*, and distinct *Relations*, in the same singular Nature or Essence? The Doctor will not be difficult or reserved in the matter; he answers. The *Persons*, personal *Properties*, or distinct *Relations*, are *the Divine Essence* (or Substance) *unbegotten*, and communicated by Generation and Procession; that is, *Begotten* and *Proceeding*. Do you except against it, or make doubt, that *Relations*, personal *Properties*, Unbegotten, Begotten, and Proceeding, are properly called *Persons*, or may have the names of Father, Son, and Spirit? He will deliver you from your scruples; he wisely minds

minds you, that *we muſt of neceſſity uſe ſuch words as we have; and regulate or qualifie their ſenſe, as well as we can.* In two words, he ſaith: *The Divine* Perſons *are ſo called, becauſe we muſt uſe ſuch words as we have; and becauſe they have* ſome *likeneſs to Perſons of the created Nature: but in truth they are only* perſonal Properties, *or* diſtinct Relations, *of the ſame ſingular nature, namely, of the Divinity. Or if you had rather, they are the Divine Eſſence, or Divinity, conſidered as* Unbegotten, Begotten, *and* Proceeding. This is a true and an exact Abridgment of his large Book. I will not think he has ſo little conſcience as to pretend; that the Unitarians have in their late Conteſts oppoſed this Trinity: 'tis the account that themſelves give of it, and profeſs to believe; in that part of *the Agreement*, which is in anſwer to my Lords the Biſhops of *Worceſter* and *Chicheſter*. 'Tis the account alſo given by Dr. *S---th*, in his *Animadverſions*, and his *Tritheiſm charged*; by the *Diſintereſted*, by the Biſhops of *Worceſter* and of *Sarum*. In eight years time, this fierce Oppoſer of the Unitarians has (with much to do) learned, that the Trinity is not three *Minds*, *Spirits*, or *Subſtances*, but three internal *Relations*, three perſonal *Properties* of the Divinity: In eight more,

more, it may be, he will underſtand, that thoſe are good Catholics, and orthodox Chriſtians, who reject no other Trinity, but of diſtinct *Subſtances*, *Spirits*, or *Minds*.

We are all agreed in the Faith it ſelf; and even as to the ordinary terms, the more learned *Trinitarians* wiſh, as the *Unitarians* do, that they were aboliſht: but as to ſome other leſs uſual terms, that occur in the debating theſe queſtions, there is ſome diſagreement among Divines; I take notice that, as to theſe, Dr. *Sherlock* is always on the worſe ſide, and for the weaker Reaſons.

For Inſtances. 'Tis a queſtion, whether we may not ſay *three Divine Subſtances*, as well as *three Perſons*? They that put the queſtion, or that ſo ſpeak, grant that in very deed there is but *one* Divine Subſtance, in the *abſolute* ſenſe of the word: yet may we not ſay (with St. *Hilary*) *three* Subſtances, in a reſtrained limited and *relative ſenſe*? That is, meaning thereby, the one real Divine Subſtance, conſidered in its diſtinct *Relations* or *Properties*: for hereby the Subſtance, tho 'tis not multiply'd, yet 'tis *thrice* numbred; and in that reſpect, it ſhould ſeem, may be called three *relative* Subſtances. This is a very ſlight Reaſoning, and never miſled

led any body but St. *Hilary*. For men never ſay THREE, on the account that a thing is conſidered *three manner of ways*; with three *Modes*, three *Properties*, or three *Relations*. Why therefore ſhould we introduce ſuch an improper, as well as dangerous form of ſpeaking concerning God: a form of ſpeaking that in its natural and immediate ſenſe, deſtroys the divine Unity; and introduces, by their own confeſſion, three Gods? Notwithſtanding, Dr. *Sherlock* is pleaſed to approve of that form; he ſaith,

P. 379. *We muſt not ſay* three Subſtances *in the Trinity, for fear of ſaying* three Gods. *Yet we muſt own that each Divine Perſon is true and perfect ſubſtance; and three in ſubſtance are* three Subſtances: *not indeed three* abſolute, *but three* relative *Subſtances.* —*In the Trinity there is* one *abſolute, and* three relative *Subſtances.*

P. 287. *An* abſolute *Subſtance is one entire, perfect, individual Whole:* Relative *Subſtances are internal ſubſiſting* Relations, *in the ſame one whole individual ſubſtance.*

The *meaning* is Orthodox; the *words* Heterodox, and Phantaſtical. He grants that to affirm three Divine Subſtances, is to affirm three Gods: but then, meaning by Subſtances, *what no body means*, the ſame

ſame one abſolute individual Subſtance numbred three times, or numbred with its three *Properties*, or Relations, we may affirm three Divine *relative* Subſtances.

Again. Thoſe that grant, it muſt not be ſaid in any ſenſe whatſoever, that there are *three* Divine Subſtances; yet they make it a queſtion, Whether the one only Divine Subſtance is one *numerical* Subſtance, and one *ſingular* Subſtance? They own the Divine Subſtance is really but one, *identically* one; 'tis one *ſelf-ſame* Subſtance, not two or three, in whatſoever ſenſe. For all that, they are not willing to ſay; the ſubſtance of God is *numerically one*, is one *numerical*, or one *ſolitary*, or *ſingular* Subſtance: their wiſe Reaſon is this. Tho' the Divine Subſtance is one *in Nature*, and *in the thing numbred*, as the School-Doctors ſpeak; yet being *thrice numbred*, for it is numbred diſtinctly to (or *with*) its three *Properties*, or *Relations*: therefore we deny it to be *numerically* one; tho 'tis *really*, *naturally*, and *identically* one. Now we grant to theſe Anti-Grammarians, that the thing they intend, is true; but they ſhould not deny propoſitions, that are true *in their Grammatical and immediate Senſe*; becauſe they are not true *in a ſenſe*, *that no man ever was ſo wild as to impoſe it upon*

upon them. 'Tis ſomething worſe than trifling, to deny orthodox and *neceſſary* Propoſitions, on a pretence that mad men may take them in a ſenſe contrary to their direct, immediate and conſtant meaning. When we ſay, the divine (or any *other*) Subſtance is numerically one; or is one *numerical*, one *ſingular*, one *ſolitary* Subſtance: every body knows that the words ſolitary, ſingular and numerical, are uſed only in oppoſition to *plural*, *more*, or *many*; ſo that one *ſolitary*, *ſingular*, or *numerically one* Subſtance, is intended only as a denial of this heretical Propoſition, *three Subſtances.* If the reaſon given by Dr. *Sherlock*, and ſome few others, why they will not ſay, one *ſingular*, or *ſolitary*, or *numerically one* Subſtance, were good; they muſt never ſay one *numerical*, one ſolitary or ſingular *Earth* or *Sun*, or other body or thing whatſoever. Nay, they muſt not dare to ſay, *numerically one* GOD, one *ſingular* or *ſolitary* GOD; which yet are forms, that (I preſume) they will own as orthodox, nay as neceſſary. There is no *thing* or *being* whatſoever, but muſt be at leaſt *thrice numbred*; namely to the three Properties of every Being, *Verum*, *bonum*, *unum*: therefore if we

we muſt not ſay, one *numerical*, or one *ſingular* or *ſolitary* Divine Subſtance, becauſe this Subſtance is thrice numbred, *viz.* with or *to* its three *Relations* or *Properties*; neither may we ſay one numerical, or one ſolitary or ſingular *Earth*, or *Sun*, becauſe they are *thrice numbred*, are diſtinctly numbred to the three Properties of *Verum, bonum, unum.* But this impertinent niceneſs, Dr. *Sherlock* every where takes up, and contends for it, as an *important* truth: unleſs we exclude the terms *ſolitary*, *ſingular* and *numerical*, he is poſitive that we ſhall loſe the three Divine Perſons.

P. 195. " The *ſingularity* of the Divine " Subſtance is a *Sabellian* Notion, and de- " ſtroys the faith of a *real* Trinity.

P. 213. " An *individual* Subſtance; " but not one *ſolitary*, or *ſingular* Sub- " ſtance.

P. 246. " The Unity of the Divine " Subſtance or *Nature* is *not an unity of* " *number*, but *of ſameneſs*, and identity.

P. 249. " 'Tis not a *ſingular* Nature or " Subſtance, with *the ſingularity of ſoli-* " *tude*, but of *identity* or ſameneſs.

I imagine Dr. *Sherlock*'s beſt Friends will not deny, 'tis an odd melancholy humour

mour of his, to eſpouſe and affect Terms and Phraſes, that have been rejected by all Learned Men, as improper, dangerous, and tending to Tritheiſm; merely that he may amuſe Novices in theſe Queſtions, and may afterward explain his Riddles, to the admiration of the weak or unlearned, and the ſleight of the learned and diſcerning.

He concludes his Book, with an Addreſs to the Unitarians, to this effect. "They "were not beſt to concern themſelves, "with him, or againſt his Book; for if "they do, they ſhall certainly be called "to account for it *in this World*, as well "as in the World to come. I take this to be another melancholy Fit: for the Orthodox will but laugh at the threatnings of a Man under publick Cenſure, for the very worſt Heterodoxy. What! three *relative* Subſtances, call to account honeſt, orthodox *one abſolute* Subſtance? Believe me, Doctor, they deſpiſe the menace. They ſend you word, *Phyſitian heal thy ſelf.* Mr. Informer, purge your own Books, even this *laſt*, of the many Heterodoxies in it. As,

Page 191. "The Son is nothing "elſe but the whole, entire, immediate

"par-

" participation of the Father's Subſtance; " and therefore is as perfectly one with " the Father, as the Father is one. 'Tis *Sabellian*. The Son is not ſo one with the Father, as the Father is one; for the Father is *numerically one*, as all confeſs: but Father and Son are *numerically two*, with all but *Sabellians*.

P. 198. " Each of them (Father, Son " and Spirit) is perfect God; and there- " fore *an* infinite *Mind*, and *an* infinite " Spirit. 'Tis *Tritheiſm*: For if each of the Divine Perſons is *an* infinite Mind, or *an* infinite Spirit; then there are *three* infinite *Minds* and Spirits: which is the Hereſy you have been retracting throughout this whole Book. I ſuppoſe however, he meant to ſay, each Divine Perſon is infinite Mind and Spirit; which is Catholic, and Unitarian.

P. 247. " To have aſſerted one *ſingular* " Divine Subſtance, which is but *one in* " *number*, had given up the cauſe to the " Sabellians. One *ſingular* Divine Subſtance, and *one in number*, is the Language of the Catholic Church, and is refuſed by none but *Arians* and *Tritheiſts*.

P 369. " The name *God* doth not ori- " ginally, abſolutely, and immediately " belong

" belong to the Son or Spirit; but *only* " *relatively.*

P. 373. " Only the Father is *abſolutely* " and *ſimply* God. 'Tis *abſolute* Hereſy. Taking *Father*, *Son* and *Spirit* in the perſonal ſenſe; the Son and Spirit are no leſs *abſolutely* and *ſimply* GOD than the Father is. When the Unitarians ſay, *only the Father is God in the abſolute ſenſe*; they do not take the word Father *perſonally*: but by *Father* they mean the Deity. Father, Son and Spirit, *as Perſons of the Deity* (taking *Perſons* in the Eccleſiaſtical ſenſe, or ſenſe of the Church) are *equally God*: neither is *afore* or *after* other, neither *greater* or *leſs* than the other, as *Athanaſius* rightly teaches.

In ſhort, this perpetual Litigant underſtands not well, either the Doctrine of the Church, or the Party he oppoſes; theſe are not Queſtions, in which he might concern himſelf: they require an attention and ſubtilty of thought, which either he ſeems not to have had, or to have loſt. He has concerned himſelf in the ſuppoſed Controverſy between the Church and the *Socinians*, with like prudence, dexterity and ſucceſs, as the *preſent* Archbiſhop of *Paris* has intermedled between

the *Janſeniſts* and *Moliniſts*. The Archbiſhop publiſhed an Ordinance, againſt a Book entituled, *An Expoſition of the Catholic Faith, touching Grace and Predeſtination.* Father *Queſnel*, a Prieſt of the Oratory, and Mr. *du Guè*, a Learned Perſon, but who has laid aſide the habit, have ſeverally written upon this Ordinance. They agree that what is propoſed *as Catholic Doctrine* in the *ſecond* Part of the Archbiſhop's Ordinance, is really the ſame with what is cenſured in the *firſt* Part *as the Hereſy of the Janſeniſts*: but in another point theſe two Criticks differ. For Mr. *du Guè* thinks the Archbiſhop may be pardoned the Errors in the firſt Part, in conſideration of his ſecond Part: but Father *Queſnel* doth not approve this Indulgence of Mr. *du Guè*; he maintains that the Archbiſhop cannot make ſatisfaction, but only by *a Recantation.* 'Tis well for Dr. *Sherlock*, that he dos not write *among* or *to* the Wits of *France*: for his Books concerning theſe Queſtions, in truth are nothing but *heaps of Contradictions.* A Perſon well verſed in the Controverſy may ſpell out his meaning, and find what is the Writer's aim; but he muſt pardon a thouſand Improprieties

prieties and Blunders, and as many Contradictions, ſome of them in the very ſtreſs, turn, or (as they ſpeak) nicety of the Controverſy.

FINIS.